ſider that ſeveral of the European Courts anſwered much later, others not at all; that the King of Spain gave for anſwer, he regarded not the acceptance as an act of free will; and that the King of Sweden returned the letter, delivered to him by the French Miniſter at Stockholm, without even opening it; (2) the new Legiſlative Power of France had certainly reaſon to be ſatisfied with the early and friendly anſwer of the Court of Great Britain.

But another event took place before the cloſe of the year, which could by no means afford the Court of Great Britain reciprocal ſatisfaction. By the twenty-fourth article of the treaty of commerce (3) it had been ſtipulated, that if one of the two contract-

(2) Moniteur, 5th November 1791.

(3) The treaty of commerce between Great Britain and France is printed among the State Papers, in the Annual Regiſter for 1796: and alſo in Marten's Recueil des Principaux Traités, tom. ii. p. 680—707.

in-

ing powers ſhould be engaged in war with a third, all veſſels belonging to ſubjects of the other power ſhould be provided with ſea-letters and certificates, that the maſters of them, in caſe they ſhould be ſuſpected of carrying ammunition or any warlike ſtores to the enemies of the former power, which was ſtrictly prohibited by the twenty-ſecond article, might be able to clear themſelves. It had been further ſtipulated by the twenty-ſixth article, that if a ſhip of war belonging to the former power met a merchant-ſhip belonging to any ſubject of the latter, the captain of the ſhip of war ſhould have the liberty of ſending a perſon on board the merchant-ſhip to examine the ſea-letter and certificate. Agreeably to theſe ſtipulations, Sir Richard Strachan, at that time Captain of the Phœnix, meeting with ſome French merchantmen on the coaſt of Malabar, in November, 1791, determined to examine their ſea-letters and certificates; but as they

were,

were under convoy of a French frigate, he firſt ſent off an officer to ſignify his intentions to the Captain, and to requeſt him to make the proper ſignal to the merchantmen under his convoy. Now, as England was then engaged in a war with Tippoo Saib, who, as well as his predeceſſor, had always ſtood in cloſe alliance with France, and a ſuſpicion therefore muſt neceſſarily ariſe that theſe merchantmen were carrying warlike ſtores to the enemies of Great Britain, eſpecially ſince they were under convoy of a frigate, which, as France was then engaged in no war, appeared unneceſſary for veſſels which had nothing contraband on board, the captain of the French frigate was in duty bound to attend to the repreſentations of Sir Richard Strachan, and to make a ſignal to the veſſels under his convoy, to bring to and clear themſelves. But inſtead of this, he made a ſignal to the merchantmen to croud ſail and get off; and, to pre-

vent

vent Sir Richard Strachan from following them, he attacked the Phœnix, as if Great Britain and France were then at war, nor did he even wait till the Engliſh lieutenant was returned on board, to make report to his captain. It is true, that the French frigate, after a ſhort engagement, was obliged to ſtrike, (4) and that her captain was ſo ſeverely wounded, that he paid for his temerity with the loſs of his life: his conduct however, was not only a violation of the treaty of commerce, but an act of open hoſtility.

As ſoon as intelligence of this event arrived in England, Government, of courſe, complained of it to the Court of France; but the complaint was delivered in terms of great moderation, and it was requeſted

(4) Commodore, now Admiral, Cornwallis, who then commanded the Engliſh fleet at Tellichery, gave orders, however, for her immediate releaſe.

only,

only, that orders might be given to prevent ſimilar accidents in future, which might tend to deſtroy that harmony, which the Britiſh Government ſincerely wiſhed to preſerve. But when the note of the Britiſh Ambaſſador (5) was read in the National

(5) It is contained in the Moniteur, 12th April, 1792, and is as follows:

" Milord Gower a l'honneur de communiquer à M. " Dumourier la traduction des pieces dans leſquelles " ſe trouvent les détails du combat, qui a eu lieu entre " le Phœnix, et la frégatte Françaiſe la Réſolue. La " premiere eſt une lettre écrite par M. Strachan au " Commodore Cornwallis: l'autre un récit de M. " Parker lieutenant envoyé par le Capitaine Anglais " à bord de la frégatte Françaiſe. Il eſt aiſé de ſe con- " vaincre, que la conduite du Capitaine Anglais eſt " conforme aux traités, et que cette affaire ne doit " pas porter atteinte à la bonne harmonie qui ſubſiſte " entre les deux nations. Il paraît que ſon objet était " de s'aſſurer, ſi les bâtimens Français ne contenaient " aucunes des proviſions militaires, qu'on eſt convenu " par le traité de regarder comme contrebande, et qu'il " eſt réciproquement défendu de fournir aux ennemis " de l'une ou l'autre des parties contractantes. C'eſt " après cette communication amicale que le Capitaine Français

Aſſembly, the members of it were ſo far from offering any ſatisfaction for the violation of the treaty of commerce, and the act of open hoſtility committed on the part of France, that they did not condeſcend to make even an apology for the paſt, or to promiſe ſecurity for the future.(6) On the contrary, they ſought only evaſions, to juſtify the conduct of the French Captain. At laſt, the matter was referred to a Committee, and there it ended.

" Français fit un ſignal ſur ſon bord pour que les ba-
" timens Français fiſſent voile, au lieu d'amener. Il
" fit feu, ſans attendre aucune explication ultérieure.
" La conduite de ce dernier eſt répréhenſible, ſur-tout
" en ce qu'il a fait feu, avant que le lieutenant du
" vaiſſeau Anglais fût de retour à ſon bord. Sa Ma-
" jeſté Britannique ne doute pas que le Roi ne donne
" des ordres, pour prévenir déſormais des évenemens
" ſemblables, qui pourraient troubler la paix, qu'il
" aura toujours à cœur de maintenir."

(6) See the Debates in the Moniteur, 12th April, 1792.

The

The preceding tranſaction, though in itſelf of no great importance, ſhews at leaſt the ſpirit which animated the Britiſh Government on the one hand, and the French National Aſſembly on the other. It ſhews that the former was deſirous to maintain peace, and that the latter was totally indifferent about it. (7.)

(7) It ſhews the diſpoſitions of the two Governments even ſo late as April 1792.; for though the engagement between the frigates took place in Nov. 1791, on which account I have related the whole tranſaction in this chapter, yet the news of the engagement arrived not in London before the beginning of April, 1792.

CHAP. IV.

Meeting of the Britiſh Parliament on the 31ſt of January, 1792. His Majeſty's Speech. Reduction of the Britiſh Forces both by Sea and by Land. Ceſſation of the Treaty of Subſidy with Heſſe Caſſel. Abolition of Taxes to the annual Amount of two hundred thouſand Pounds. Falſehood of the Aſſertion, that Great Britain acceded in March, 1792, to what is called the Treaty of Pavia. Meaſures taken at this Time in France, for an Augmentation of its Forces by Sea as well as by Land.

ON the 31ſt of January, 1792, the ſeſſion of the Britiſh Parliament, was opened by a ſpeech from the throne, (1) in

(1) See Rivington's Annual Regiſter, 1792, p. ii. State Papers, p. 187; or New Annual Regiſter, Public papers, p. 50.

which

which his Majeſty, having mentioned the treaty of peace between the Emperor and the Porte, and the preliminaries already ſigned between the latter power and Ruſſia, concluded in the following terms: "The "friendly aſſurances, which I receive from "foreign powers, and the general ſtate of "affairs in Europe, appear to promiſe to "my ſubjects the continuance of their pre-"ſent tranquillity. Under theſe circum-"ſtances, I am induced to think, *that ſome* "*immediate reduction may be ſafely made in* "*our naval and military eſtabliſhments:* and "my regard for the intereſts of my ſubjects "renders me at all times deſirous of avail-"ing myſelf of any favourable opportunity "of *diminiſhing the public expences.*"

On the 9th of February, when this ſubject was taken into conſideration by the Houſe of Commons, the number of ſailors and marines to be employed for the year 1792,

was reduced to ſixteen thouſand:(2) and on the 10th of February, even the army of Great Britain, though at that time ſo inconſiderable in point of number, that no foreign power could have taken umbrage at it, likewiſe underwent a reduction.(3) Further, on the 17th of February, Mr. Pitt informed the Houſe that the Heſſian ſubſidy being now expired, "his Majeſty's Miniſters were not "of opinion, that the circumſtances of the "country required its renewal."(4) By theſe and ſimilar reductions the annual expenditure of Great Britain received a diminution of four hundred thouſand pounds: and it was reſolved, that taxes ſhould be aboliſhed

(2) Ib. p. 183. Ib. p. 145.

(3) On the 15th of February, guards and garriſons were eſtimated, from December 25, 1791, to June 24, 1792, at 17,013 men: but from June 25, to Dec. 24, 1792, at only 15,701. Ib. ib.

(4) New Annual Regiſter, 1792, Britiſh and foreign hiſtory, p. 38.

to

to the amount of one half of this ſum, and that the other half ſhould be applied to the diminution of the national debt.(5)

The preceding meaſures ſufficiently evince the peaceful diſpoſition of the Britiſh Cabinet, and its determination to take no part in a war againſt France. And as there ſeemed no reaſon to believe, at the beginning of the year 1792, that France itſelf would ſo ſoon attempt to diſturb the repoſe of Great Britain, Miniſters flattered themſelves with the pleaſing expectation, that the plans, by which they endeavoured to promote the happineſs of their country, would be continued without interruption. "Though "I am not ſo vain," ſaid Mr. Pitt, on the 21ſt of February, "as to ſuppoſe, that *all* "my preſent ſpeculations ſhould ſucceed "agreeably to my wiſhes, or that no un-"foreſeen event ſhould prevent the execu-

(5) Ib. p. 40.

"tion of any one of them: yet it is not un-
"reaſonable to expect, that the peace, which
"we at preſent enjoy, ſhould continue at
"leaſt *fifteen years*, ſince at no period of the
"Britiſh hiſtory, whether we conſider the
"internal ſituation of the kingdom, or its
"relation to foreign powers, has the proſ-
"pect of war been further removed, than at
"preſent." But unfortunately for Great Britain, and unfortunately for all Europe, theſe expectations were annihilated, in leſs than a year, by events, which no human ſagacity could at that time predict.

The report, that England acceded in March, 1792, to what was called the treaty of Pavia, (6) is contradicted by the facts, which have been already related in this chapter. It is even doubtful, whether the treaty itſelf, which is ſaid to have been con-

(6) This treaty may be ſeen in Martens' Recueil des principaux Traités, tom. v. p. 5.

cluded

cluded in July, 1791, be genuine or not:(7) but even if we ſuppoſe it to be genuine, England was no party to it, for there is not only no ſignature on the part of England,(8) but England is not once mentioned in it, either directly or indirectly. Conſequently, the only queſtion to be examined is, whether the report be true, that England acceded to it in the month of March following: and that this report, in ſupport of which not a ſingle fact has ever been adduced, is devoid of foundation, appears from the general conduct of the Britiſh Government at this very period, which is wholly

(7) Martens, in the place juſt quoted, ſays, that he is "fort éloigné d'annoncer comme digne de foi une piece, que le contenu, les circonſtances qui ont précédé, la ſignature même, ſemblent déclarer apocryphe."

(8) The only names ſigned to this treaty are, Leopold, Prince of Naſſau, Count Florida Blanca, Biſchofswerder.

irreconcileable with the proſpect of a war with France. But to remove all doubts on this ſubject, it will be neceſſary to enquire into the origin of the report, which took its riſe, not at the time of the pretended acceſſion, but in the following month of November. In the Moniteur of the 18th November, 1792, the treaty of Pavia was printed: and after the ſignatures, which cloſe every treaty, was added the following note by the editor, "England *paſſively* acceded to it in March, 1792."(9) This anonymous note is the ſource from which the report in queſtion took its riſe. In the firſt place, therefore, we muſt aſk: what did the unknown author intend to expreſs by this *paſſive* acceſſion? Does the epithet apply to the act of acceſſion, as the conſtruction ſeems to indicate, or to the meaſures which England was to adopt in conſequence of the

(9) "Nota. L'Angleterre y a *paſſivement* accédé en Mars, 1792."

acceſſion?

acceſſion? Either to the one, or to the other, it muſt neceſſarily apply, if the note be not abſolutely devoid of meaning. But no government can accede to a treaty, without ſignifying its acceſſion by ſome *poſitive* act, ſuch as the ſignature of an Ambaſſador. A *paſſive* acceſſion, therefore, if regard be had to the acceſſion itſelf, is a contradiction. Nor will the explanation be more ſatisfactory, if reference be made to the meaſures, which England was to adopt in conſequence of the acceſſion: for the acceſſion to a treaty on the one hand, (12) perfectly paſſive conduct on the other, are two things, which, though not contradiction, are yet of ſuch a nature the one deſtroys the other. The note, therefore, in the Moniteur, in whatever way it is interpret it, contains its own confutation. This was clearly perceived by thoſe commentators and quoters of the note, who were

(12) Saint Ildefonſe.

were inimical to the Britiſh Government: and for that reaſon they have omitted the inconvenient word "paſſively," which the author of the note had cautiouſly inſerted, becauſe ſix months had then already elapſed after the pretended acceſſion, and yet no viſible effect had been produced in the conduct of the Britiſh Adminiſtration.

It appears then, on a near examination, that the report in queſtion is founded, firſt an anonymous and contradictory note in niteur of the 18th November, 1792, dly on arbitrary alterations, which n made in ſubſequent copies of it. hen is it poſſible, that any man, who a regard for truth, can ſubſcribe to a port, which reſts on *ſuch* a foundation? Indeed I believe that every man, who has ſeriouſly enquired into it, muſt perceive its falſity. The author of the Britiſh and foreign

reign hiſtory in the New Annual Regiſter, for 1793, whom no one will accuſe of partiality in favour of Miniſters, is himſelf of opinion, "that the inſinuation is merely the effect of party malevolence."(10) Nor did Briſſot believe in this idle ſtory: for in his ſpeech of the 12th of January, 1793, which was delivered nearly two months after the treaty of Pavia, and the above-mentioned note appeared in the Moniteur, he acknowledged,(11) that England had obſerved the moſt ſtrict neutrality in reſpect to France, till after the 10th of Auguſt, 1792. (12) And on the 13th of January, 1793, the Na-

(10) See p. 7.

(11) His own words are, "Le Cabinet de Saint James a pluſieurs fois proteſté d'obſerver ſcrupuleuſement la neutralité envers la France, *et en effet elle a été juſqu' à l'immortelle journée du 10 Août.*" Moniteur, 15th January, 1793.

(12) Whether the neutrality was violated after this period is a queſtion which will be examined in the ſequel.

tional

tional Convention itſelf admitted, (13) that the obſervation of this ſtrict neutrality toward France, on the part of England, had been continued even to the beginning of the year 1793. But the National Convention would certainly not have made this confeſſion, unleſs at leaſt a majority of its members had been perſuaded, that the report of England's acceſſion to the treaty of Pavia was ungrounded. The very ſame confeſſion contains likewiſe a direct acknowledgment on the part of the French Government, that England had no concern in any coalition againſt France, either in 1791 or 1792.

(13) The introduction to the decree of the 13th Jan. 1793. is as follows. "La Convention Nationale "informée par le miniſtre des affaires étrangeres des "préparatifs extraordinaires de l'Angleterre, conſidé- "rant le changement de conduite de ce pays relative- "ment au caractere de neutralité, *qu'il avait con-* "*ſervée juſqu'ici, touchant les affaires de la France,* "*etc.*" Moniteur, 16th Jan. 1793.

We

We have ſeen that the Britiſh Cabinet, in the ſpring of the year 1792, by a reduction of the army and navy, by the abolition of the treaty of ſubſidy with Heſſe Caſſel, by the repeal of taxes to the amount of two hundred thouſand pounds, and by a decided reſolution to engage in no coalition againſt France, evinced a manifeſt diſpoſition to peace with that country. Yet at this very period France itſelf not only took very active meaſures for an augmentation of its army, but likewiſe, what is not generally known, and what could have reference only to England, made preparations for an augmentation of its marine. On the 18th of March, 1792, which was full ſix weeks after the Britiſh Parliament had reduced the ſailors and marines to be employed that year to *ſixteen thouſand*, Theodore Lameth, in the name of the Committee for Naval Affairs, delived a report to the National Aſſembly, in which he ſaid, "that about *eighty thouſand*

"ſail-

"ſailors would be neceſſary, in order to man "the veſſels now at the diſpoſition of the "ſtate, and which the honour of the na- "tion, as well as the intereſt of its com- "merce, *does not permit us to reduce.*" (14). The Committee further requeſted the National Aſſembly to take the ſpeedieſt meaſures for the organiſation of the navy: (15) and the propoſal was made with an enthuſiaſm, which indicated a diſpoſition to engage in a war by ſea, (16) as well as by land.

(14) "L'armement entier des batimens, dont l'état "peut diſpoſer aujourd'hui, et que l'honneur de la "nation, ainſi que l'intérêt de ſon commerce *ne per-* "*met pas de réduire*, exigerait environ 80,000 mate- "lots." Moniteur, 31 Mars, 1792.

(15) "C'eſt au nom de ces troupes, dont le cou- "rage ſoutint toujours l'état du pavillon Français, etc. "que notre comité vous ſupplie, *de ne pas différer* "l'organiſation de l'artillerie, et des troupes de la "marine." Ib.

(16) Notre artillerie *prête à gronder ſur tous les mers*, etc. Ib.

It

It is true, that theſe were only preparatory ſteps to an augmentation of the French marine: but, as they were taken at a time when England had juſt made ſo conſiderable a diminution in its own naval force, the conduct of the National Aſſembly unavoidably excited the ſuſpicion of an hoſtile diſpoſition toward England. The Engliſh Government, however, ſtill adhered to its principles of neutrality: and as the whole attention of France was ſoon after directed to a war on the Continent, the intended augmentation of the French marine was of courſe deferred to a more convenient opportunity.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Declaration of War againſt the King of Hungary and Bohemia. Notification of it to the Court of Great Britain by the French Miniſter Chauvelin. Determination of the Britiſh Cabinet to perſevere in the Syſtem of Neutrality: and Chauvelin's Letter on this Subject. Letter of Thanks from the King of France to the King of England. Chauvelin's Note to Lord Grenville, in which it was requeſted, that all Britiſh Subjects might be forbidden to ſerve under any foreign Power at War with France. Punctual compliance with this requeſt, in a Proclamation

clamation of the twenty-fifth of May. Remarks on the Conduct of the Britiſh Cabinet.

ON the 20th of April, 1792, the National Aſſembly decreed almoſt unanimouſly, (1) and amidſt the plaudits of a numerous croud of ſpectators, war againſt the King of Hungary and Bohemia. The French Miniſter in London made a formal notification of it to the Court of Great Britain: and the conduct which our Government obſerved on this occaſion, affords a new proof of its reſolution to preſerve the moſt ſtrict neutrality. Chauvelin's letter to his own court, dated 28th of April, is deciſive on this ſubject. (2)

(1) Only ſeven members voted againſt the war. See the Moniteur, 22d April, 1792.

(2) "*Londres, le 28 Avril,* 1792.

"J'ai communiqué au Lord Grenville toute les "pieces, que vous m'aviez addreſſée relativement à

Immediately on the receipt of Chauvelin's letter, the King of France wrote a letter of thanks to the King of England, (3) dated 1ſt of May, in which he ſaid, "I embrace this opportunity to expreſs to your Majeſty, how ſenſible I am of all the public marks of affection you have given me. "*I thank you for not having become a party to*

"la déclaration de guerre. L'effet de cette nouvelle "a été de produire une baiſſe conſidérable dans les "fonds publics. M. Pitt a fait démentir dans tous "les papiers les bruits qui couraient, que des ordres "avaient été donnés pour la preſſe. Il a répondu "formellement à une députation de commerce, *que* "*le Gouvernement ne ſe mêlerait pas des affaires de la* "*France.* L'intérêt qu'il met à ſoutenir les fonds pu- "blics et une nouvelle garantie de ſa neutralité. La "guerre n'eſt pas du goût de la nation; on ne fait "aucuns préparatifs, ni dans les ports, ni dans les "arſenaux. *Il eſt certain, que le ſyſteme de neutralité* "*débattu au conſeil, y a été adopté.*" Moniteur, 8th May, 1792.

(3) See New Annual Regiſter, 1792. Public Papers, p. 96: or Rivington's Annual Regiſter, 1792. State Papers, p. 256.

"*the*

"*the concert formed by certain powers againſt*
"*France.*"

On the 15th of May the French Ambaſſador communicated a Note to Lord Grenville, (4) in which, after a long and detailed repreſentation of the motives which had induced the National Aſſembly to declare war againſt the King of Hungary and Bohemia, and after the moſt ſolemn proteſtation, firſt, that France renounced every idea of aggrandizement, and ſecondly, that

(4) In the Annual Regiſter, 1792. Public Papers, p. 99, this note is dated 15th of May; but, probably owing to an error of the preſs, it is called in the ſuperſcription, p. 97, a note preſented 12th of May. That 15th May is the true date, is certain: for not only Lord Grenville in his anſwer to this note, but likewiſe Mr. Chauvelin himſelf in his two following notes, of the 24th of May and the 18th of June, quotes it as a note dated 15th of May. This determination is not ſuperfluous, becauſe ſeveral writers, in conſequence of the above mentioned typographical error, have aſcribed to the note in queſtion a falſe date.

France would never interfere in the interna
concerns of other nations, (5) the followin
demand was made of the Court of Grea
Britain: "That, conformably to the treat
"of navigation and commerce, of the 26th
"of September, 1786, his Britannic Ma-
"jeſty ſhall prohibit all the ſubjects of Grea
"Britain and Ireland (and publiſh the orde
"in the uſual way throughout the two
"kingdoms, and the iſlands and countrie
"dependent thereon) from committing any
"hoſtilities againſt French ſhips at ſea: and
"that they ſhall not take out any patent,
"commiſſion, or letters of repriſal, from the
"different Princes or States who are, o

(5) Whether the French Rulers have kept their word, in regard to this ſolemn proteſtation, which they had already made in their Manifeſto to all States and Nations, on the 29th of December, 1791, is a queſtion which no one *at preſent* will venture to anſwer in the affirmative. An appeal to it, therefore, can prove nothing more than the *hypocriſy* of thoſe who made it.

"ſhall

"ſhall be at war with France, or make uſe, "in any way, of ſuch patents or commiſ- "ſions."

With this demand the Court of Great Britain punctually complied: for in ten days after the receipt of Mr. Chauvelin's note, a proclamation, (6) dated 25th of May, (7) was publiſhed, agreeably to his own preſcription, containing the following order relative to the ſubject in queſtion. "Whereas

(6) See Rivington's Annual Regiſter, 1791, State Papers, p. 195; or New Annual Regiſter, 1792, Public Papers, p. 99.

(7) On the preceding day Lord Grenville ſent a Note to Mr. Chauvelin, in which, after expreſſing his concern for the hoſtilities which had broken out between France and Auſtria, he aſſured the French Ambaſſador, that the Court of Great Britain was ready "to fulfil, in the moſt exact manner, the ſtipula- "tions of the treaty of navigation and commerce, "of which his moſt Chriſtian Majeſty required the "execution." See Rivington's Annual Regiſter, 1792, State Papers, p. 259.

" the moſt Chriſtian King hath cauſed appli-
" cation to be made to his Majeſty, that his
" Majeſty would, conformably to the article
" of the treaty of navigation and commerce
" concluded at Verſailles 26th of September,
" 1786, renew and publiſh, in all his do-
" minions and countries, the ſtrict and ex-
" preſs prohibitions contained in the ſaid
" article; his Majeſty doth hereby ſtrictly
" forbid all his ſubjects to receive any com-
" miſſion, for arming and acting at ſea as
" privateers, or letters of repriſals, from any
" enemy of the moſt Chriſtian King, or
" by virtue, or under colour of ſuch com-
" miſſions or repriſals, to diſturb, infeſt
" or any ways damage his ſubjects; or to
" arm ſhips as privateers, or to go out to ſea
" therewith, under the ſevereſt puniſhments
" that can be inflicted on the tranſgreſſors,
" beſides being liable to make full reſtitu-
" tion and ſatisfaction to thoſe to whom
" they have done any damage."

The

The French Government had certainly reaſon to be ſatisfied with this friendly conduct of the Britiſh Court: and in fact it was ſo, as appears from the following paragraph in Mr. Chauvelin's Note to Lord Grenville, of the 18th of June. (8) "The "undersigned Miniſter Plenipotentiary of "his Majeſty the King of the French, has "tranſmitted to his Majeſty the official "note which Lord Grenville addreſſed to "him on the 24th of May laſt, on the "part of his Britannic Majeſty, in anſwer "to that which he had the honour to de-"liver to him on the 15th of the ſame "month, together with the royal proclama-"tion publiſhed in conſequence of it. He "is directed to aſſure his Britannic Majeſty "of the due ſenſe which the King entertains

(8) The original is printed in the Moniteur, 20th July, 1792; and an Engliſh tranſlation in Rivington's Annual Regiſter, 1792. State Papers, p. 263. In the New Annual Regiſter it is omitted.

" of *the friendly diſpoſitions, and of the ſenti-*
" *ments of humanity, of juſtice and of peace,*
" *which are ſo clearly manifeſted in that an-*
" *ſwer.*" (9) Since then the French Government itſelf expreſſed ſo much ſatisfaction at the conduct of the Britiſh Court relative to Mr. Chauvelin's note of the 15th of May, one ſhould ſuppoſe, that no one would venture to make this very conduct a ſubject of animadverſion and complaint. But as the three following charges have been preferred by Britiſh writers, firſt, that Mr. Chauvelin was ſuffered to wait too long for his anſwer; ſecondly, that in Lord Grenville's anſwer no notice was taken of the motives which had induced the National Aſſembly to declare war againſt the King of Hungary; and thirdly, that in the inter-

(9) The words of the French original are, " Il a
" reçu d'ordre de préſenter à ſa Majeſté Britannique le
" témoignage de la ſenſibilité du Roi aux *diſpoſitions*
" *amicales, et aux ſentimens d'humanité, de juſtice, et de*
" *paix, ſi bien manifeſtés dans cette réponſe.*"

val

val was iſſued a proclamation againſt ſeditious writings in Great Britain; it is neceſſary to make a particular reply to each. With reſpect to the firſt charge, every impartial man muſt admit, that an interval of nine days, for it was really no more, (10) was by no means an exorbitant length of time for the deliberations on the demand of the French Government, and the preparation of a proclamation, which was to ſerve as a rule for all Britiſh ſubjects during the war, eſpecially as the Britiſh Government was at that time engaged with domeſtic concerns of the higheſt importance. The ſecond charge is ſtill more extraordinary: for if Lord Grenville, in his anſwer to Mr. Chauvelin's note, had taken notice of the motives which had induced the National Aſſembly to declare war againſt the King

(10) Lord Greville's anſwer was dated 24th of May, and Mr. Chauvelin's note, as I have already proved, was dated 15th of May.

of

of Hungary, he would have acted in direct oppoſition to the principle which the French themſelves continually repeated, that no nation has a right to intermeddle in the affairs of another. And in regard to the proclamation againſt ſeditious writings, which was iſſued on the 21ſt of May, it ſtood in no connection with the diplomatic relations between Great Britain and France: it related ſolely to matters of national police, and theſe were of too much conſequence to be deferred, in order that Mr. Chauvelin might receive his anſwer a few days ſooner. In fact, the proclamation of the 21ſt of May has ſo little reference to the preſent hiſtory, that it might be ſafely paſſed over in ſilence: but, as ſeveral writers have contended that it evinced a hoſtile diſpoſition toward France, we will examine it at full length in the following chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Proclamation of the 21ſt of May, 1792, againſt Seditious Writings; and Confutation of the Objections which have been made to it.

DURING a conſiderable time before the appearance of this proclamation, various political publications, which by no means contributed to promote the welfare of the Britiſh Conſtitution, had been circulated with great aſſiduity throughout Great Britain. And theſe publications were not works of cool and philoſophical inquiry, they were not calculated to exerciſe the judgment of the learned, but to inflame the paſſions of the illiterate. They were deſigned

ſigned chiefly for the lower claſſes, to whoſe underſtandings they were particularly adapted: and that the pooreſt individual might be enabled to procure them, not only the cheapeſt poſſible editions were publiſhed, but even thoſe cheap editions were ſold at a price which could hardly repay the expences of printing. In theſe publications the lower claſſes were taught, that the Britiſh Conſtitution, the pride of Britons and the envy of foreigners, a conſtitution which Monteſquieu and De Lolme had made the theme of their admiration, was a ſyſtem of ſlavery. (1)

(1) This was particularly Mr. Paine's doctrine, who aſſerted in the moſt general terms, that "*all* "kings were tyrants, and their ſubjects *ſlaves*." See New Annual Regiſter, 1792, Britiſh and Foreign Hiſtory, p. 72, whence it likewiſe appears, that Paine's writings had been circulated even in public ſchools. That Paine's ſecond part of the Rights of Man was a libel on the Conſtitution, was admitted in the Houſe of Commons on the 30th of April, 1792, by an eminent leader of Oppoſition: and a celebrated writer of the ſame party has likewiſe granted, that ſeveral publications

They were taught to believe, that evils, which not even the wiſeſt Adminiſtration can remove, were merely the reſult of political inſtitutions, which diſtributed wealth and power in unequal portions, as if the ſame advantages were to be derived from indolence and ignorance, as from induſtry and talents. Even imaginary evils were repreſented as real ones; and cauſes, which had formerly produced content, were converted into motives of complaint. Before this period the lower, as well as the higher orders of ſociety, had been inſtructed in the uſeful leſſon, that, as they were privileged

lications, at that time in general circulation, "were, "according to the juſt theory of the law, unqueſtion-"ably libels." The ſame writer adds: "Theſe *irre-*"*gularities* and *exceſſes* were for a conſiderable length "of time wholly overlooked by Government:" and it may be further added, that, if theſe avowed exceſſes had been any longer treated with indulgence, the revolution, which ſoon after deprived the King of France of his throne, would in all probability have extended itſelf to Great Britain.

on the one hand to exerciſe the rights of free-born Britons, they were bound on the other hand to fulfil the duties of good citizens. But by the new doctrine the lower claſſes eſpecially were informed, that the *Rights* of man muſt now occupy their whole attention, and that theſe rights, if properly exerciſed, would lead to wealth, to power and to honour. This doctrine unavoidably produced a very ſenſible effect: for where ſhall we find a man, who poſſeſſes not vanity and ambition, who would not rather be rich than be poor, who would not rather govern, than be governed? The ignorant and the unwary regard only *immediate* conſequences, and have not ſufficient penetration to diſcover *ultimate* effects. They perceive not, that a ſyſtem in which all men chooſe to govern, can no where be of long duration; that, though well calculated to deſtroy an exiſting conſtitution, it muſt ceaſe the moment a new one is erected, whatever

ſhape

ſhape the new conſtitution aſſumes, or however ſplendid the title with which it is adorned. They perceive not that a ſyſtem, which leads immediately to anarchy, muſt ultimately lead to deſpotiſm, and that the ſeverity of the latter is always proportioned to the exceſſes of the former (2): nor are they aware, that they are mere inſtruments in the hands of a few ambitious demagogues, who amuſe mankind with the magic words of liberty and equality, not with a view of promoting the happineſs of their fellow citizens, or of introducing a real ſyſtem of equality, which can no where exiſt, but ſolely to exchange the old ſyſtem of inequality for one which is better adapted to gratify their private vanity and ambition. Further, the effects of the new doctrine were ſo much the more extenſive, as the writings in which it was contained were not merely

(2) The tyranny of Robeſpierre affords a ſtriking proof.

circulat[illegible]

circulated in the common courſe of trade, but were induſtriouſly diſtributed by numerous ſocieties, who had correſpondents in every part of the kingdom. Laſtly, one at leaſt of theſe ſocieties, the Society for Conſtitutional Information, a ſhort time before the proclamation of the 21ſt of May, opened by its own avowal a correſpondence with the Jacobin Club in Paris, whoſe grand object was the deſtruction of monarchical government of every deſcription, in which it likewiſe ſucceeded in its own country, within ten weeks after the period in queſtion. (3)

(3.) So early as the 4th of May, 1792, the Society for Conſtitutional Information reſolved, that a committee ſhould be appointed to conſider of a correſpondence with the Jacobin Club in Paris, as appears from an advertiſement inſerted by order of the Society in the Morning Chronicle, 8th May. And about the middle of this month an addreſs was actually voted and ſent to the Jacobin Club, containing the following paſſages: "Brothers, and Fellow-citizens "of the World, the cordial and affectionate recep- "tion with which you have honoured our worthy "country-

Under theſe circumſtances the Britiſh Cabinet deemed it neceſſary to iſſue the following proclamation:

"countrymen Mr. Thomas Cooper and Mr. James "Watt, members of the Society at Mancheſter, and "united with our Society, has been communicated to "us by the correſpondence of thoſe Gentlemen." (From this paſſage we learn, that even before the month of May, 1792, deputies had been ſent to the Jacobin Club.) "It is not among the leaſt of the "revolutions which time is unfolding to an aſtoniſhed "world, that two nations, nurſed by ſome wretched "craft in reciprocal hatred, ſhould ſo ſuddenly break "their common odious chain, and ruſh into amity. "The principle that can produce ſuch an effect is the "offſpring of no earthly *court:* and whilſt it exhibits "to us the expenſive iniquity of *former* politics, it en-"ables us, with bold felicity, to ſay, *We have done with* "*them.* In contemplating the political condition of "nations, we cannot conceive a more diabolical ſyſ-"tem of government, than that which has hitherto "*generally* been practiſed over the world." Though this langage is cautiouſly obſcure, its meaning is very eaſy to be diſcovered. That the Addreſs was ſent to the Jacobin Club at Paris at leaſt a week before the proclamation of the 21ſt of May was iſſued, appears from the reſolution entered into by the Society on the

"Whereas divers wicked and ſeditious
"writings have been printed, publiſhed,
"and induſtriouſly diſperſed, tending to ex-

18th of May, (which in the Morning Chronicle of the 25th of May immediately precedes the addreſs itſelf, namely, "The following Addreſs to the Friends "of the Conſtitution at Paris, commonly called Ja-"cobins, and which was by the direction of this So-"ciety ſent to them *laſt week*, was ordered for pub-"lication." The information, therefore, which Government received of this addreſs, was probably one of the principal motives to the proclamation of the 21ſt of May: and every man who thinks the Britiſh Conſtitution worth preſerving, muſt admit, that it was high time to put a ſtop to proceedings which tended to the deſtruction of it. The Society of the Friends of the People, at a meeting held on the 12th of May, in conſequence of a letter from the Chairman of the Society for Conſtitutional Information, and four days after the advertiſement relative to the then intended addreſs to the Jacobin Club had appeared in the Morning Chronicle, reſolved that an anſwer ſhould be returned, which concluded in the following words: "We decline all intercourſe with a "Society whoſe views and objects, as far as we can "collect them, from the various reſolutions and pro-"ceedings which have been publiſhed, we cannot help

"cite tumult and diſorder, by endeavouring "to raiſe groundleſs jealouſies and diſcon- "tents in the minds of our faithful and "loving ſubjects, reſpecting the laws and "happy conſtitution of Government, civil, "and religious, eſtabliſhed in this kingdom, "and endeavouring to vilify and bring into "contempt the wiſe and wholeſome provi- "ſions made at the time of the glorious re- "volution, and ſince ſtrengthened and con- "firmed by ſubſequent laws, for the pre- "ſervation and ſecurity of the rights and "liberties of our faithful and loving ſub- "jects; and whereas divers writings have

"help regarding as *irreconcileable with thoſe real in-* "*tereſts* on which you profeſs to inform and enlighten "the people." See the Morning Chronicle, 14th May, 1792. Since then the Society of the Friends of the People have declared, that the proceedings of the Society for Conſtitutional Information were irreconcileable with the real intereſts of the People of Great Britain, no one of its members can repreſent the proclamation of the 21ſt of May as unneceſſary, without arraigning the proceedings of his own Society.

" alſo been printed, publiſhed, and induſtri-
" ouſly diſperſed, recommending the ſaid
" wicked and ſeditious publications to the
" attention of our faithful and loving ſub-
" jects: and whereas we have alſo reaſon to
" believe that correſpondencies have been
" entered into with ſundry perſons in fo-
" reign parts, with the view to forward the
" criminal and wicked purpoſes above men-
" tioned: and whereas the wealth, happi-
" neſs and proſperity of this kingdom do,
" under Divine Providence, chiefly depend
" upon a due ſubmiſſion to the laws, a
" juſt confidence in the integrity and wiſ-
" dom of Parliament, and a continuance of
" that zealous attachment to the Govern-
" ment and Conſtitution of the kingdom,
" which has ever prevailed in the minds of
" the people thereof: and whereas there is
" nothing which we ſo earneſtly deſire as
" to ſecure the public peace and proſperity,
" and to preſerve to all our loving ſubjects

" the

"the full enjoyment of their rights and "liberties, both religious and civil: We "therefore being reſolved, as far as in us "lies, to repreſs the wicked and ſeditious "practices aforeſaid, and to deter all per-"ſons from following ſo pernicious an ex-"ample, have thought it fit, by the advice "of our Privy Council, to iſſue this our "Royal Proclamation, ſolemnly warning all "our loving ſubjects, as they tender their "own happineſs and that of their poſterity, "to guard againſt all ſuch attempts, which "aim at the ſubverſion of all regular go-"vernment within this kingdom, and which "are inconſiſtent with the peace and order "of ſociety; and earneſtly exhorting them "at all times, and to the utmoſt of their "power, to avoid and diſcourage all pro-"ceedings tending to produce riots and tu-"mults. And we do ſtrictly charge and com-"mand all our magiſtrates in and through-"out our kingdom of Great Britain, that

" they do make diligent inquiry, in order to
" diſcover the authors and printers of ſuch
" wicked and ſeditious writings as aforeſaid,
" and all others who ſhall diſperſe the ſame:
" and we do further charge and command
" all our ſheriffs, juſtices of the peace, chief
" magiſtrates in our cities, boroughs and
" corporations, and all other our officers and
" magiſtrates throughout our kingdom of
" Great Britain, that they do, in their ſe-
" veral and reſpective ſtations, take the moſt
" immediate and effectual care to ſuppreſs
" and prevent all riots, tumults, and other
" diſorders, which may be attempted to be
" raiſed or made by any perſon or perſons,
" which, on whatever pretext they may be
" grounded, are not only contrary to the
" law, but dangerous to the moſt important
" intereſts of this kingdom. And we do
" further require and command all and every
" our magiſtrates aforeſaid, that they do
" from time to time tranſmit to one of our

Principal

"Principal Secretaries of State; due and "full information of ſuch perſons as ſhall "be found offending as aforeſaid, or in any "degree aiding or abetting therein: it being "our determination, for the preſervation of "the peace and happineſs of our faithful "and loving ſubjects, to carry the laws vi-"gorouſly into execution againſt ſuch offen-"ders as aforeſaid."(4)

It is evident, that this proclamation had no relation to the Government of France: it was a mere act of national police, which no more concerned the French Government, than the meaſures taken in France relative to the emigrants concerned the Engliſh Government. France, therefore, had no right to complain of it, as an eminent oppoſition writer has himſelf acknowledged. But if

(4) Rivington's Annual Regiſter, 1792, State Papers, p. 192; or New Annual Regiſter, 1792, Public Papers, p. 52.

France had no right to complain of it, what right can any man poſſeſs to repreſent it as inimical to France? The period, however, it is ſaid, at which the proclamation was iſſued, was very critical. This is perfectly true; but the period was critical for *England*. Why, therefore, might not Government take meaſures to prevent an impending evil, as well at this, as at any other time? It is further objected, that there is an expreſſion in the proclamation, which *may* be applied to certain Frenchmén, namely, "that correſpondencies have been entered into with ſundry perſons in foreign parts." Now, the term "ſundry perſons in foreign parts" is ſo general, that no one would apply it to himſelf who was not conſcious of having correſponded with a political ſociety in England.(5) Nor does the queſtion relate to a

(5) Condorcet, in his report to the National Aſſembly, on the 16th of February, 1792, relative to a conſpiracy againſt the new Conſtitution of France, ſpoke in

government, but ſimply to *individuals*: no government, therefore, and conſequently not even that of France, could be affected by it, however clear the reference might have been to certain inhabitants of that country. Even if a particular expreſſion had been uſed inſtead of a general one, if inſtead of "ſundry perſons in foreign parts, had been ſaid "ſundry Frenchmen," no objection could have been made to it, ſince the Society for Conſtitutional Information, by its own avowal, commenced a correſpondence with the Jacobin Club in Paris, before the appearance of the peſent proclamation, not to mention the numerous, but leſs dangerous, addreſſes, which had been tranſmitted to various ſocieties in France during more than two years

in much ſtronger terms of a connexion between the leaders of it and perſons in other countries. Why did not the Britiſh Government apply to itſelf the general expreſſions uſed by Condorcet? The anſwer is obvious. Becauſe it was conſcious of having no concern in a conſpiracy againſt the French Conſtitution.

paſt.

paſt.(6) In fact, it was the *Britiſh* Government, and the Britiſh Government alone, which had a right to complain on this ſubject: it had a right to demand of the French Government, if not ſatisfaction, at leaſt an explanation, and an aſſurance of its diſapprobation of the conduct of certain individuals in that country in regard to Great Britain, eſpecially as the principle, that no one had a right to intermeddle in the internal affairs of another nation, was no where ſo ſtrongly enforced as in France itſelf. It is true, that the Britiſh Government made no formal demand of any ſuch explanation: but Mr. Chauvelin himſelf was ſo convinced of the neceſſity of making one, that on the 24th of May he ſent a note to Lord Grenville,(7) in which he declared,

(6) See Rivington's Annual Regiſter, 1792, part ii. p. 128—144.

(7) Rivington's Annual Regiſter, 1792, State Papers, p. 260.

"If

"If certain individuals of this country have "eſtabliſhed a correſpondence abroad, tend- "ing to excite troubles therein, and if, as "the proclamation ſeems to inſinuate, cer- "tain Frenchmen have come into their "views, this is a proceeding wholly foreign "to the French Nation, to the Legiſlative "Body, to the King, and his Miniſters; it "is a proceeding, of which they are en- "tirely ignorant, which militates againſt "every principle of juſtice, and which, "whenever it became known, would be "univerſally condemned in France." Further Mr. Chauvelin was ſo deſirous of reſcuing his Court from all ſuſpicion of favouring ſedition in Great Britain, a ſuſpicion which the Britiſh Cabinet did not entertain, for no alluſion was made in the proclamation to any Government, but merely to certain individuals, that he even requeſted his note might be laid before the two Houſes of Parliament, previous to the debates on the

the proclamation, which, however, could not be granted, because it was contrary to the forms of the British Constitution, as Lord Grenville informed him in a note written on the following day,(8) to which Mr. Chauvelin immediately replied,(9) "In making this "request, my Lord, I intended to obviate "the false interpretations, which might be "occasioned in the two Houses by the ar- "ticle of the proclamation, which is the "subject of it: I flattered myself by these "means to contribute toward the mainte- "nance of that harmony and of that cordi- "ality between the two states, of which I "with joy remarked the expression in the "assurance, which you gave me, that it is "no less desired by his Britannic Majesty, "than by the King of the French."

Since then, the proclamation of the 21st of May, by no means disturbed the har-

(8) Ib. p. 261. (9) Ib. p. 262.

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